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DICKEY COUNTY LEADER The Official Newspaper of Dickey County

Vol. 137, Issue 9 • Ellendale, ND 58436 • Phone: 701-349-3222 • Email: dcleader@drtel.net • \$1.00 per issue • March 4, 2021 First Digital Archive of Ellendale Newspapers Is Online: www.bit.ly/dclarchive

by Ken Smith

Two years ago this month a representative from Advantage Archives, a Cedar Rapids Iowa firm that specializes in digitization, contacted the Ellendale Historical Society. For years Society members have wanted to find a practical and economical way to make the issues of the *Dickey County Leader*—all the way from 1882 to the present—available online for anyone to browse and search without cost and without registration. Now that initial contact has borne fruit.

Advantage Archives is now several years into a cooperative arrangement with interested North Dakota communities and with the State Historical Society of North Dakota to transfer newspapers from microfilm to online digital format. As of today, more than fifty publications from around the state are on the site. And as of last week, 22,000 pages of issues from the first 55 years of the *Leader* and the *North Dakota Record* (a weekly paper published in Ellendale until 1916) are accessible online.

But this, of course, is just the beginning. When sufficient funds have been raised to cover the costs, the issues from 1939 to 2020 will be included in the archive. Also, the microfilms, especially in the early decades, are incomplete. At least a third of the issues prior to 1939 still need to be photographed manually from paper copies housed at the *Leader* office and the Dickey County Courthouse. The \$2,470 to pay for the initial run (now complete) was loaned by a local history enthusiast. The Ellendale Historical Society is relying on the generosity of donors, in gifts both large and small, to raise the funds (\$14,000) to pay for the entire project. Several donated even before the archive was online, and one person, who grew up in Ellendale, immediately pledged \$500.00.

Donations from all sources are of course welcome, though it is anticipated that individual donors will provide the majority of the funding. This will give them a sense of ownership of the project. The organization has long received a considerable share of its funding from these annual memberships, so one of the goals is to expand the membership rolls, while also letting everyone know that Society's mission to "preserve and to present our local history" (both inside and outside the Coleman Museum) is alive and well.

When the project is finally completed, Ellendale will be one of the fortunate towns whose people, regardless of location, will be able to freely search for anything, including information about friend and relatives, scores and details about sporting events and elections, and the whole amazing variety of writing that preserve the history of our town and area.

In a recent conversation with the Leader, the State Historical Society's Assistant Archivist Shane

Molander explained how the state's newspapers are preserved. "We still use microfilm," Shane explained, "because it is still the standard for permanent preservation of newspapers and historical documents." Shane's department receives a copy of every single newspaper published every day and every week in the state—about 80 different publications. A full time microfilming professional lays out the pages of each paper, one by one, and films them with a super high-resolution camera. Filming of current papers absorbs most of the time and resources of the lab, which is why Shane recommended that the missing Leaders from the early years be transferred directly to digital with a high-resolution camera.

Anyone who has done much genealogical work has probably spent time with a microfilm viewer. The state Historical Society has a number of such machines, and most college and university libraries (and some public libraries) have them as well. The Coleman Museum has one, which was obtained at a surplus auction at NDSU. But the machines are not always easy to use. One can only move from one image to another chronologically, and there is no way to search for text. Online digital access is an enormous advance. Searches are not perfect, since optical character recognition is only as good as the original pages, but essentially make possible what was not possible previously. Advantage Archives reminds users that one sometimes needs certain tips and tricks to find what one is looking for. But to be able to do it without leaving one's home or office is truly a monumental step forward.

People who have used other digital archives like Newspapers.com or newspaperarchive.com, will notice that the layout of the Advantage Archives system is different. Instead of a search result appearing immediately as a visual image of a page, the first thing one sees is a box with highlighted text, surrounded by other text, which may have some garbled words. The actual page image appears only after clicking the link on the search result. Getting used to the system can take a few hours, but it is well worth the time for serious seekers.

Your help is needed to complete the project. It is hoped that those who can spare a portion of the forthcoming COVID-related stimulus check, will keep this project in mind. Contributions should be mailed to:

DeeAnne Gall, Treasurer **Ellendale Historical Society** P.O. Box 604, Ellendale ND 58436. Short link for accessing the Ellendale archive:

www.bit.ly/dclarchive Short link for accessing the North Dakota archive:

www.bit.ly/ndarchive



ellendalehistoricalsociety.advantage-preservation.com

The Community History Archive, initiated by the Ellendale Historical Society, employs a unique and highly functional layout. In initial use the site has proven to be highly responsive and, after some getting used to, easy to navigate. Access is free and requires no sign-ins or registrations. Such archives have proven to be a very valuable resource not only for research into genealogy and family history, but also for K-12 and collegiate education and business, including law, real estate, farming and many other areas. When complete, the archive will provide access to all 138 years of Ellendale newspapers.

ESHING IN FULL SWING,
CROP REPORT INDICATES DICKEY COUNTY

FAIR TO BE HELD

ON SEPT. 17-18-19



And Ellendale Commercial.

PROVES LEADER'S IDEA

'JUNIOR BOOSTER" AP-

ELLENDALE, DICKEY COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA, THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 1925.

All the microfilmed issues of the Dickey County Leader from the 1880s to 1939 are now online. The issues that were not on microfilm will be photographed in the Leader Office and then placed online. The completed collection will also include Forbes newspa-

All available microfilms of the North Dakota Record. (published in Ellendale from 1894 to 1916) were included in the project and are now online. Only a few issues from the late 1890's were preserved on microfilm, but the later issues are well represented. This image is of a special edition published April, 1898.

Transitions Column By Ken Smith - Editor, Dickey County Leader

Newspaper Archive Project www.bit.ly/dclarchive

Putting out a newspaper 138 years ago was hard. Every page—with the exception of preprinted plates that came in the mail—had to be composed letter by letter, sliding various-sized metal letters into stacked rows, locking them into a frame called a chase, and placing the those frames one-by-one on a letterpress. Then, in rapid succession, while a hand crank or sputtering gas engine whirled a big open flywheel, broadsheets had to be deftly inserted into the press and deftly removed, both motions just in time for the newly inked letters to squeeze down and release. A wrong move could mean a torn or misprinted sheet, or worse, a mashed finger.

It taxes my mind to imagine the work that went on in these old offices, which were usually cramped and sweaty in summer, cramped and chilly in winter. Up front the editor might be seen furiously scribbling out text on paper sheets, in between visits from businessmen wanting ads and folks from the countryside dropping in to share the latest gossip. Between the editor's desk and the clatter be to the worker who inserted the wrong letters, or placed an advertising image into the chase upside-down. Workers in the shop were called "printer's devils," partly to relieve editors from a bit of the blame from too-noticeable errors. Considering the enormous opportunities for error, those mistakes in most papers were amazingly rare.

ER SES- The amount of required

Printing technology did change during the (so far) 138 years of Ellendale newspaper production. In 1909 the Record got a small Morganthaler Linotype, a 'wonderful machine" that allowed "one person in a short time to able to set as much type as three or four expert compositors would be able to set by hand." Record editor A.M. Beveridge, who had recently purchased the paper from attorney and Democratic politician Hector Perry, extended a cordial invitation to the public to come into the office and watch the marvelous machine in action. Visitors were invited to take home a line of lead type with their name cast in it. 300 showed up on an early July Market Day to watch their samples made.

In 1917, the Republican Leader got

of presses, a typesetter would be translat- an even better linotype, upon rebuilding cal informational look-ups most of us ing written text into lines of type. Woe from the spring fire that destroyed nearly would like to pursue from time to time, all of East Main. The Record perished in that same fire, and never rebuilt. Thus ended 22 years of often fierce competition between the two papers. Now with a wider audience (and with the 1916 death of Fred Goddard), the Leader began toning down its Republican advocacy.

> More recent technology--much of it digital--has made creating newspapers far easier. It has in many cases also facilitated their replacement and (as some believe) their obsolescence. In reality, the role of newspapers and newsprint has evolved, not ended. The Leader is here

> This newspaper is one of the oldest continuously published weeklies in our state. Each week since June 4, 1882, its presses have cranked out an issue, about 7,800 in all. Every issue has something valuable in it. Taken together they are a priceless treasure.

We at the *Leader*, and at the Ellendale Historical Society, are grateful for those who are making possible the full digitization of Ellendale's newspapers.

It is hard to overstate the usefulness of this resource. Even beyond those practiwe think it will help fuel a small renaissance of interest in our local history. I often think of how Kevin Kendall's amazing photographic work (see page 1) has spawned a revival of enthusiasm from those having memories from any era tied up in our very special little town. This archive will build on that and do much more besides.

This project is a big deal. Visit the archive at the short link, www.bit.ly/ dclarchive. You might be pleasantly surprised at how much you'll find already, and the project has just gotten started.

If you'd like to have a share in supporting this project, send your donation via check to the Ellendale Historical Society.

DeeAnne Gall, Treasurer **Ellendale Historical Society** P.O. Box 604, Ellendale ND 58436.

The Ellendale Historical Society is a 501-c3 organization, and as such, donations are tax deductible. Be sure to request a receipt if you would like credit.

www.bit.ly/dclarchive



This image from the January 27, 1909 edition of the North Dakota Record was captured from the new online digital archive.